

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 22893 01 OF 02 251220Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 TRSE-00

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O 251212Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3454

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

USMISSION SINAI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 22893

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EG

SUBJECT: CAIRO PRESS EAGER BUT CAUTIOUS CHRISTMAS DAY

REF: CAIRO 22833

SUMMARY. PRESS MORNING OF BEGIN ARRIVAL HIGHLY EXPECTANT BUT VENTURES NO PREDICTIONS. CONSIDERS CHRISTMAS MEETING MEASURE OF WHETHER THERE IS CONTINUING DIALOGUE AHEAD WITH JUST PEACE AT ITS END--NOT AS CULMINATION OF SADAT DIPLOMACY. GOE AT PAINS TO STRESS ITS SINCERITY IN PURSUIT OF PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. PRESS EXPECTS THREE EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI MEETINGS TODAY, BRUITS POSSIBILITY BEGIN WILL OVERNIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS CHRISTMAS MORNING PLAYED UP EGYPTIAN POSITION

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22893 01 OF 02 251220Z

AS EMERGING FROM MEETING OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL NIGHT BEFORE: TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR ALL COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

2. ISMAILIA DISCUSSIONS EXPECTED INVOLVE THREE SESSIONS

DECEMBER 25 AND PRESS CONFERENCE "EIIHER TODAY OR

TOMORROW." AT FIRST MEETING OF DELEGATIONS, ISRAELI SIDE WILL PRESENT "SEVERAL MAPS" OUTLINING VIEWS ON WITHDRAWAL. SECOND MEETING, SADAT/BEGIN TETE-A-TETE, WILL BE DEVOTED TO EXAMINATION OF BROAD OUTLINES OF SETTLEMENT AND REVIEW OF RESPECTIVE POINTS OF VIEW. THEN WILL FOLLOW WORKING LUNCHEON AND THIRD MEETING, AGAIN OF DELEGATIONS, TO EXAMINE IN DETAIL "STEPS TO PEACE" AND SECURE BOUNDARIES FOR ALL PARTIES. PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF TALKS SCHEDULED FOR 1700 "IN CASE DISCUSSIONS FINISH TODAY." CONFERENCE WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL TOMORROW IF TALKS REQUIRE BEGIN TO SAY.

3. EGYPTIAN SIDE FOR TALKS WILL CONSIST OF VP MUBARAK, PRIMIN SALIM, DEFMIN GAMASY, DEP PRIMIN TUHAMI, PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR HASSAN KAMEL, MINSTATE FOR FONAFFAIRS BOUTROS GHALI, AND CHIEF CONFERENCE DELEGATE ABDEL MEGUID. AHRAM REPORTS NEWLY APPOINTED FONMIN MOHAMED IBRAHIM KAMEL WILL ARRIVE FROM BONN TODAY AND JOIN DELEGATION AS WELL. IN ADDITION BEGIN, ISRAELI PRINCIPALS WILL BE FONMIN DAYAN, DEFMIN WEIZMAN, LEGAL ADVISOR ROSENNE, MILITARY ADVISOR TAMIR. BEN-ELISSAR NOT LISTED AMONG DELEGATES, BUT WILL, WE UNDERSTAND, BE PRESENT.

4. PALESTINIANS. STRESS ON PALESTINIAN ASPECTS OF EGYPTIAN POSITION WAS LAID THROUGH HEAVY COVERAGE OF SADAT FORCEFUL SPEECH TO WEST BANK DELEGATION CHRISTMAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 22893 01 OF 02 251220Z

EVE. SADAT INSISTED ON END TO ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE IN WEST BANK. WENT ON TO EXALT HISTORICAL EGYPTIAN SUPPORT AND SACRIFICES ON BEHALF OF PALESTINIANS, EXCORIATING REJECTIONISTS (AND SOVIETS) FOR TRADING ON SUFFERINGS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. PLO NOWHERE MENTIONED. HOWEVER, PRESS ALSO REPORTS STATEMENT, "THE PLO IS NOTHING" BY MAYOR OF YATTA AND OTHER COMMENTS SUPPORTING EGYPTIAN RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS FROM HASSAN EL SHAWEYHI AND BARHAM GABARI. SADAT REPORTEDLY DELIVERED HIS COMMENTS HEATEDLY, AT ONE POINT REFERRING TO ISRAEL AS "THE ENEMY," ALTHOUGH THIS WAS MOST PROBABLY CONSCIOUS PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN LOSS OF CONTROL.

5. IN ISRAEL, ACCORDING NEWS AGENCY REPORTS, EXPERTS SPENT DECEMBER 24 PUTTING FINISHING TOUCHES ON BEGIN PROPOSALS. STORIES SAY BEGIN ATTEMPTING GAIN OPPOSITION SUPPORT FOR HIS VIEWS ON WEST BANK. NOTE PERES ANNOUNCED BEGIN HAS TAKEN IMPORTANT STEPS TOWARDS PEACE, BUT LABOR PARTY HAS BASIC (UNDISCLOSED) OBJECTIONS TO HIS PROPOSALS.

6. U.S. FRONT PAGES REPORT PRESIDENT CARTER AND KING HUSSEIN WILL MEET IN TEHRAN NEXT WEEK. REPORTS SAY

MEETING ANNOUNCED BY SPOKESMAN IN "BLEENS" GEORGIA
FOLLOWING DIRECT U.S.-JORDANIAN CONTACTS. SADAT CHRISTMAS
MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER ALSO ON FRONT PAGES. EXPRESSED
EGYPTIAN RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT'S POSITIVE ROLE IN PUSHING
FORWARD PEACE PROCESS AND EXPECTED CONTINUATION OF THESE
EFFORTS.

7. EGYPTIAN PERSPECTIVE. ON FRONT PAGE, AHRAH EDITOR
HAMDI GAMAL WRITES THAT EYES OF WHOLE WORLD ON ISMAILIA
BUT THAT IMPORTANCE OF MEETING WILL NOT BE WHETHER BEGIN

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 22893 02 OF 02 260539Z

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 22893

PROPOSALS ACCEPTED OR REJECTED. WORLD WILL SEE TODAY
WHETHER ISRAEL SINCERE IN DESIRE FOR PEACE. EGYPTIANS
REALIZE DEPTH OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES BUT
BELIEVE THEIR RESOLUTION LIES THROUGH UNDERSTANDING HOPES
AND FEARS OF OTHER SIDE. EGYPT UNDERSTANDS ISRAEL AND IS
WAITING TO HEAR FROM BEGIN, THROUGH HIS PROPOSALS, IF HE
UNDERSTANDS ARABS AS WELL. "WE CAN THEN CONSIDER TRUE
PEACE POSSIBLE AND CONCLUDE THAT THE OCTOBER WAR WAS THE
LAST BATTLE."

8. EDITORIALS ALSO SOUGHT PLACE CHRISTMAS MEETING IN
PERSPECTIVE. AHRAH COMMENTED THAT THERE COULD BE NO
TRANSIT FROM WAR TO PEACE IN ONE DAY BUT ONLY THROUGH

LONG PROCESS WHICH DEPENDS ON GOOD BEGINNING. FOR THE
MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE, THIS WOULD MEAN CONSIDERATION OF ALL
ASPECTS OF PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. EGYPT HAS TAKEN MOST OF
THE STEPS TOWARDS PEACE THUS FAR AND ISRAEL MUST NOW
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22893 02 OF 02 260539Z

TAKE EQUAL STEPS.

9. COMMENT. GOE CLEARLY AWARE OF TENDENCY TO VIEW
TODAY'S MEETING AS CLIMACTIC EXPRESSION OF SADAT'S PEACE
INITIATIVES AND IS TRYING TO PUT IT IN TERMS OF T
INTENTIONS RATHER THAN AN END IN ITSELF. EILTS.

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